Editorial:  
Students to benefit from fee increase

Let’s face it. Rider University is not the most fun school in the world. There’s no football team, no Student Recreation Center (yet) and the Lawrenceville campus often resembles a ghost town on weekends. Only Rider’s many clubs and organizations have stood in the way of total on-campus boredom, though they often lack the funds to make a sizeable increase in the entertainment quotient. However, the Student Government Association (SGA) has aimed to change that by asking for an increase in the Student Activities Fee paid by each student.

SGA recently made its proposal to the Board of Trustees and a decision is still forthcoming but, if accepted, the fee would increase by $25 per semester next year for a total increase of $50 when all is said and done. While this may not seem like a lot of money, it could still negatively impact many students who are paying their own way through college. Rider’s tuition is steep enough as it is and another $50 could be enough to cause serious inconveniences for these individuals. However, the lack of student activities at Rider has always been a common conversation piece on both campuses, and the only way to solve the problem is for all students to make this sacrifice.

Not only has past funding not been enough to provide satisfactory entertainment here at Rider, but inflation has also caused the amount of money raised each year to be worth less and less. According to SGA president Haley Baum, the cost of a $1 item has increased to $1.13 since 2000, which was the last time the Student Activities Fee was increased. True, at first glance it appears to be a miniscule amount, but when you consider that over 3,000 students pay the $200 fee each year, it starts to add up. For this reason, the fee must be raised every so often in order to keep the amount of money available to student organizations and clubs constant.

In addition, the number of clubs at Rider has increased tremendously over the past year. SGA treasurer Steven Klemchalk said that 15 new clubs have been approved and that they all require proper funding. However, many of those clubs have been receiving inadequate amounts of money because there simply isn’t enough to go around. The proposed increase would help to remedy this problem.

This issue is an important one at Rider because clubs and organizations are an integral part of the college experience. Not only do they allow students with a common interest to meet and discuss their passion, but also provide real world leadership experience to the founding members. For example, the University does not provide club sports teams with the facilities and equipment they need to play. Rather, SGA funds granting to the team and the club president must then decide how to spend it. This sort of real-world experience is invaluable and cannot be gained in a classroom. By raising the Student Activities Fee, the Board of Trustees and SGA would make a strong statement in support of these clubs and the values that can be learned from both leading and participating in them.

Clubs and organizations are a big part of life at Rider University. Without them, there would be absolutely nothing to do on-campus short of going to class and studying. If funding is raised soon, students can expect to be introduced to many more activities that could become a large part of the Rider culture. Otherwise, you may find yourself trapped in that all-too-familiar ghost town come Saturday.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion Editor.

Quote of the Week

“Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.” — P.J. O’Rourke

Artistic Sensibilities:  
Mediocrity is king in today’s art world

Ayn Rand’s “The Fountainhead” should be required reading for all intelligent members of the human race. It is, indeed, Rand explaining her philosophies under the guise of a plot, but that doesn’t lessen the novel’s impact. The key points contained within its pages are things that our society may do well to regard.

For a literary work published in 1943 with a plot based in the 1920s, “The Fountainhead” concerns itself with things easily observed in present times. The subplot of selling mediocre hacks as idols of great talent never fails to aggrivate me, as I’m tired of seeing average people heralded as The Patron Saints of the Staggeringly Brilliant. These individuals’ only real talent is having found the right audience to adore them. There’s an infuriating anti-intellectual movement going on and it leaves me with both a sadness for the legitimate prodigies and the desire to lock myself away with relics from the Great Talents of the Past. But who decided that these items not only possessed aesthetic and intellectual worth, but also should be celebrated by future generations as “art?” On what grounds is this decision made?

Having been a student of both the fine arts and literature for most of my academic career, I’ve learned these pieces are selected by elusive intellectual figures. This canon is ever-changing, reinventing itself with new eras of great work while still accommodating the old treasures. Who are these people doling out intellectual immortality like it’s Halloween candy? As “The Fountainhead” proposes, are they selecting mediocre tripe in an attempt to dumb down future masses, elevating their own generation?

Judging by the crap we devour, it’s not an impossibility. Popularity is the yardstick by which modern greatness is measured. Wealth measures worth; ergo, if it sells, it’s good! Meanwhile, the artist actually deserves of exaltation dies unknown. In losing this source of acclaim-wor...

See ‘Fine Arts’ page 9